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CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF HANDLING OF U-2 INCIDENT
(edited version at Yellow tab I)

1. On Sunday May 1 following the receipt of information that the U-2 was down in the Soviet Union in the vicinity of Sverdlovsk, there was a meeting late that afternoon in CIA at which Mr. Hugh Cumming represented State. Present also were officials of CIA directly involved in this matter, including Mr. Bissell toward the end of the meeting, and I believe a representative of Defense. At this meeting it was decided to issue a story from the base at Adana, Turkey, to the effect that a NASA high altitude weather plane was missing; the plane had been last heard of in the vicinity of Lake Van at 7 a.m. (2) and that at last contact the pilot had reported oxygen deficiency. Mr. Cumming informed Mr. Dillon by telephone that the plane had been lost and that after consultation with

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CIA the cover story prepared for such an eventuality would be put out at Adana in routine fashion. Mr. Dillon agreed to his course. This story

was not issued to the press until

either late May 2 or early May 3, presumably because of the necessity of reporting back the missing plane through normal channels for the sake of authenticity. The same announcement when issued said a search was being instituted for the missing plane.

2. On Wednesday, May 4, before the Soviets had made any disclosure whatsoever there were meetings at State with Colonel Burke, CIA, with Mr. Davis, Mr. Berry and Mr. Bohlen, to go over a question and answer brief for possible use by NASA in the event of Soviet disclosure, but naturally depending upon the nature of the disclosure.

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3. On Thursday, May 5, following the receipt of Khrushchev's first disclosure to the Supreme Soviet there was first of all a meeting in State in Mr. Fare's office with Mr. Davis, Mr. Bohlen, Mr. Berry and *Gen Cabell* Mr. Cabal and Mr. Hissell from CIA. This meeting was subsequently transferred to Mr. Dillon's office following the latter's return from where NSC was meeting that morning.

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4. After the NSC meeting at the President, Mr. Dulles, Mr. Dillon and General Goodpaster met to consider the handling of the U-2 incident. It was agreed that the President should not be personally involved and that the State Department should handle all publicity. Mr. Hagerty at the White House made a release stating that the President had ordered an investigation of the entire matter.

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5. During the meeting in Mr. Dillon's office the
(Tab D-5 may)
Department's release was prepared (Tab A). During the preparation
of this release Mr. Dillon talked on the telephone a number of
times with General Goodpaster and at least once with Mr. Dulles
regarding the wording of the release. The Department's release
while making reference to the original statement of the missing
plane and the oxygen failure, did not wholly commit the
Department to this version and left the matter as to whether
or not this was the same plane up in the air. The release
also referred to the fact that the Soviet Government had been
queried as to details and any particulars as to the fate of
the pilot. This release was given out at 12:45 by Mr. White

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Tab D
together with certain background remarks (also included at Tab A).

In this same meeting the text of the note to the Soviet Government was agreed on (Tab B).

6. It would appear that the decision concerning publicity *(to be handled by State)* was not conveyed to NASA in time since at 1:30 p. m. the Public

Relations Officer of NASA held a press conference at which a news

release on the U-2 incident was given to the press. *(Suggested by Hagerthy)*

+ question + answer
This release seems to have been based on the brief previously *(Bissell, Burke, etc.)* worked out by State and CIA for contingency use by NASA.

7. On May 8 there were two press and radio briefings held at the Department. One, by Mr. Tully at 11:10 a. m. (Tab B) and the other by Mr. White at 12:35 p. m. (Tab C). It will be noted that in reply to a question Mr. White stated that there was absolutely

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no deliberate attempt to violate Soviet air space and there has never been.

This statement by Mr. White appeared to have been a logical inference derived from the Department's release of May 5, and in particular the long NASA statement of the same day.

8. At 2:30 p. m. on May 6 Mr. Bohlen had a background meeting with some 35 correspondents. (Copy of transcript of this backgrounder is attached at Tab D).

9. On May 7 Khrushchev made his second statement to the Supreme

Soviet and you are familiar with the meetings and discussions on Saturday

(DCI - DDCI - Bohlen - Goodpastor)

^ prior to the release of the Department's statement which was issued at

approximately 8:00 p. m. (Tab E).

10. Sunday there was no further statement from the Department or any Government agency.

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11. On Monday you conducted the meeting in which Secretary Gates and Mr. Dulles participated which led to the statement issued just after your meeting with Mr. Dulles with Congressional leaders (Tab F).

12. There were no developments on Tuesday, but on Wednesday the President held his press conference (Tab K).

This brings the chronological account up to the departure for Paris.

In reviewing the record it would appear that the original decision taken Sunday afternoon to put out the cover story at Adana concerning a missing plane, including the reference to its location and oxygen failure in effect to a large extent committed the U. S. Government to a cover story. However, the Department's statement at 12:45 p. m. Thursday ^(5 May) was non-committal, and while making reference to a NASA story did not close the door to possible other

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variants. The slip appeared to have occurred in the failure to inform NASA in time of the White House desire that the Department should handle all publicity as a result of which NASA made a press release on the basis of a previously drawn up question and answer brief which was no longer suitable unless there had been a firm Government decision to continue with the original cover story.